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ABSTRACT

This book concerns a neglected aspect of the education of bilingual children, namely, their potential desire and ability to learn to read before age 5. The basis of the study is considered in the chapter on children as early learners, which provides accounts of children being taught to read from the age of 6 months to 4 years. The next part of the study is presented in the chapter on preschool reading and the bilingual child. Here accounts are given of how three families taught their children to read in two languages before the children entered kindergarten. It is noted that generally the parent-teacher's task consists of reading the child's wishes, inventing games to stimulate this interest, and including the child in their conversations and activities. It is also observed that early reading seems to be related to establishing a sense of personal and social values. The final chapter uses these accounts to develop specific methods and techniques for parents who wish to guide their children to early reading in two languages. (AMH)

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A Guide to Family Reading in Two Languages: The Preschool Years

Theodore Andersson
The University of Texas at Austin

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Foreword

A Guide to Family Reading in Two Languages: The Preschool Years describes how three families successfully taught their children to read in two languages before they entered the formal educational system. Dr. Andersson begins by describing early reading in monolingual settings and then expands his discussion to include bilingual homes. He provides practical ways for parents to encourage young children to read in two languages, suggestions that have implications for many aspects of language development other than reading. Many of his ideas can be used in developing training workshops for parents of children who are or will be in bilingual education programs. Dr. Andersson concludes that if bilingualism/biliteracy is to flourish in the United States, it must be nurtured in the home. Educators and parents alike can learn from the parenting practices and home environments which he describes so clearly.

Dr. Theodore Andersson, Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin, is coauthor of *Bilingual Schooling in the United States* and has written numerous other publications in the field of bilingual education. He frequently addresses language and education meetings both in the United States and abroad. A speaker of four languages, Dr. Andersson has served as president of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish

and Portuguese; he is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*. He holds the titles *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur* and *Caballero de la Orden del Mérito Civil*.

This book represents a joint publication effort of the National Dissemination and Assessment Center and the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. We share a common goal of publishing documents which address the information needs of the bilingual education community. It is with pride that we present this work by one of the most eminent scholars in the field.

National Dissemination and Assessment Center
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A Guide to Family Reading in Two Languages: The Preschool Years

I. Introduction

In 1976 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child, calling on nations of the world to set aside this year to focus attention on the needs of all children. The United States responded to this call by appointing a U.S. National Commission to evaluate the status of American children and devise programs and policies which will enhance the well-being of children.

One of the first tasks of the U.S. Commission was to gather information about American children. Though many children in this country enjoy the fruits of our bountiful land, it was immediately evident that many other American children are the victims of indifference, poverty, and neglect. As José Cárdenas has pointed out, (1979:1) the problems that beset children often cut across social, cultural, and economic lines, touching all classes of children, and are not limited to the poor or minority child.

It is my purpose in the following pages to direct attention to bilingual children between birth and age five and to consider a neglected aspect of their education, namely, their potential desire *and ability* to learn to read not only one but often two languages before entering kindergarten or first grade.

The mere enunciation of this purpose is likely to arouse skepticism, for it flies in the face of tradition, so I must first select from the literature a few of the many cases of successful reading

and underline the basic principles and practices which make evident the feasibility of early reading in two languages. It will become apparent that, contrary to popular opinion, far from overtaxing young children, the acquisition of reading ability adds greatly to the pleasure of their preschool years, a pleasure that one hopes will continue and increase during their years in school and after.

Parents are of course primarily responsible for children's preschool development, but the school cannot be indifferent to what parents have done to prepare their children for school, nor should parents consider educational responsibility ended when their children enter school. I shall therefore want to consider how parents and teachers can best build a mutually supportive relationship beginning in the children's preschool years and continuing through the grades.

The main focus of my study is family reading. This is a particularly rich field of study; for, whether the family under consideration is a small nuclear or large extended family, the number and ages of the children, the presence or absence of grandparents or other relatives, the particular relationships among the family members, and the time available for reading provide an almost infinite number of variables, only some of which I shall discuss.

And, finally, I shall try to relate the subject of family reading in two languages to the present status of bilingual bicultural education in the United States. Though bilingual education has its social, economic, cultural, political, and philosophical aspects, I intend to confine myself mainly to the educational implications of preschool biliteracy. I hope that the conclusions to which this study leads us will prove helpful and will suggest ways of enabling our bilingual children to maintain their ancestral languages and cultures, to achieve full literacy in at least two languages, and to feel comfortable and confident in both the ethnic cultures of their homes and in the mainstream culture.

II. Children as Early Learners

Everybody knows that young children have an extraordinary ability to learn, which it is safe to say nobody fully understands.

Burton White, Director of the Preschool Project at Harvard, who has spent many years studying children from birth to age three, expresses with emphasis his "belief that the educational developments that take place in the year or so that begins when a child is about eight months old are *the most important and most in need of attention of any that occur in human life.*" (1975:129–130)

Another student of early childhood, Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago, has reported after extensive research that "Put in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, from conception to age 4 the individual develops 50% of his mature intelligence. . . . This would suggest the very rapid growth of intelligence in the early years and the possible great influence of the early environment on this development" (1964:68).

Newborn children (neonates) have been the subjects of an increasing amount of investigation. William Condon of the Boston University Medical Center had been studying interactional synchrony—bodily response to speech—in adults for a decade when he decided to turn his attention to neonates. In 1974 he and his colleague Louis Sander published a by now well-known report as a result of their research on sixteen babies from

twelve hours to two weeks of age.[1] They recorded on videotape or sound film several hours of infants' activity while they were being exposed to adult speech, to isolated vowel sounds, and to tapping sounds. The babies reacted rhythmically to adult speech, whether in American English or in Chinese and whether live or recorded, but not to the disconnected vowel sounds or tapping noises. From their study the experimenters hypothesized that:

> If the infant, from the beginning, moves in precise, shared rhythm with the organization of the speech structures of his culture, then he participates developmentally through complex, sociobiological entrainment processes in millions of repetitions of linguistic forms long before he later uses them in speaking and communicating. By the time he begins to speak, he may have already laid down within himself the form and structure of the language system of his culture. (1974:101)

Like Condon and Sander, Colwyn Trevarthen,[2] a New Zealander now working in Edinburgh University, Scotland, has recorded on sound film many hours of infant behavior in interaction with mothers; but, unlike them, he is primarily interested, not so much in infant reaction to adult speech, as in babies' embryonic "intention to communicate," "prespeech and early gesticulation," and "integration of experience with communication of intent" (1977:251ff).

Early Reading

One day in 1969 I was leafing through a Spanish catalog of Aguilar, a Madrid publisher, when I came upon a fetching picture of a baby and read the heading *"Los bebés pueden leer"* (Babies can read). It was the announcement of a Spanish translation of a book by an American named Glenn Doman, titled *How to Teach Your Baby to Read: The Gentle Revolution.*[3] I found the book in the university library and devoured it

excitedly. It gave persuasive expression to my own vague preconceptions. According to Doman,

1. Tiny children *want* to learn to read.
2. Tiny children *can* learn to read.
3. Tiny children *are* learning to read.
4. Tiny children *should* learn to read (1964:9).

A little later I was organizing a conference on child language[4] and asked Glenn Doman to contribute a paper. He agreed and wrote a paper entitled "How Brain-Injured Children Learn to Read." At the time of the conference the government of Brazil was conferring on him a gold medal for his work with cerebral palsy, so that he could not present his paper personally. He called on Daniel Melcher, Chairman of the Board of the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential, to take his place. It turned out to be the most controversial paper of the conference.[5] It begins as follows:

> When you are confronted with a brain-injured two-year-old who is no further advanced than a new-born babe—who gives no evidence of being able to see or hear, let alone crawl or raise his head—teaching him to read isn't the first thing you think about. What you think about is how to get through to him, by any method, on any level.
>
> Young Tommy was such a child. His eyes wouldn't follow you, or follow a light, or work together. A loud noise wouldn't make him start. You could pinch him and get no reaction. In fact, the first time we ever got a reaction out of Tommy was when we stuck pins in him: he smiled. It was a great moment, for us and for him. We had established contact.
>
> That was when Tommy was two. By the time he was four he was reading. . . . (Andersson and Boyer, 1978:209)

The essentials of this fascinating story are told briefly on pages nine to fifteen of Doman's book *How to Teach Your Baby to Read*, to which the reader is referred. Beginning with Tommy

Lunski, Doman acquired much valuable experience with early readers, which he sets forth persuasively in his popular book, addressed to mothers. In it he declares: "Children can read words when they are one year old, sentences when they are two, and whole books when they are three—and they love it (1964:1). He has the testimony of many mothers to substantiate this claim. "But," asks Doman rhetorically, "isn't it easier for a child to understand a spoken word rather than a written one?" "Not at all," he replies. "The child's brain, which is the only organ that has learning capacity, 'hears' the clear, loud television words through the ear and interprets them as only the brain can. Simultaneously the child's brain 'sees' the big clear television words through the eye and interprets them in exactly the same manner. . . . It makes no difference to the brain whether it 'sees' a sight or 'hears' a sound. It can understand both equally well. All that is required is that the sounds be loud enough for the ear to hear and the words big enough and clear enough for the eye to see so that the brain can interpret them—the former we have done but the latter we have failed to do" (pp. 5–6).

Shortly after reading Doman's book I received a letter from Ragnhild Söderbergh, a linguist and now Professor of Child Language at the University of Stockholm, saying that she had tried out Doman's ideas on her daughter Astrid, aged two years four months. Spending from five to twenty minutes on the task each day at bedtime, she had the pleasure of seeing her girl learn steadily until at the age of three and a half she broke the code and could read any ordinary word in Swedish. Söderbergh described the process with meticulous care in her book written in English, *Reading in Early Childhood: A Linguistic Study of a Preschool Child's Gradual Acquisition of Reading Ability*,[6] a book which provides scholarly substantiation of Doman's less formalized assertions—and hence can bring his notions to an academic readership. Söderbergh began teaching her daughter

English, the second language of most educated Swedes, when Astrid was three, and later entered her in the Stockholm Lycée Français, with the result that now (March 1979) at the age of sixteen she is trilingual and triliterate.

Söderbergh's experiment was replicated by five other Swedish mothers with children aged one and a half to three.[7] From these experiments we may draw the following conclusions. Ages one and a half to three seem to be the most favorable for beginning to read. If the word "teaching" is used for initiating a child into reading, it should be understood to have a special sense. The "teacher" serves as an important model for reading as for speaking, senses the interests of the child, and helps provide suitable learning materials to satisfy these interests. The best "teacher" is, in general, the mother, father, grandparent, older sibling, or other intimate caretaker. The best "school" is the home. Reading, like walking and talking, is a developmental task, but unlike walking and talking it can more easily be inhibited, retarded, or short-circuited if not encouraged at the proper time and in the proper way. In reading, as in other forms of language, most rapid progress is made when there is the best "match"—to use Hunt's word[8]—between a child's intellectual development and environmental stimulation.

Doman remarks in his book that young children can learn to read by themselves, that "television has given away the whole secret—through commercials" (1964:5; 1975:4). A case in point is described by psychologist Jane Torrey of Connecticut College in New London.[9] Torrey heard about a boy entering kindergarten at the age of 4:10 (four years, ten months) and already reading. Curious to find out how he had learned to read, she arranged to "tutor" him in his home three hours a week during the summer when John was five years old. She learned that John had not begun to talk unusually early but that he had read almost as soon as he talked, without help or encouragement from anyone in the family. He had quite simply learned by watching and

listening to TV commercials (forty words an hour simultaneously shown and pronounced) and by reading labels on cans in the kitchen. He also read stories to his little brother at bedtime and he liked to write. From her study Torrey drew the following conclusions:

1. Reading is learned, not taught.
2. The key question is, "How does something I can say look in print?" or vice versa, "What does that print say?"
3. However useful high ability and high cultural privilege may be in stimulating reading, neither is necessary (1969: 556).

The case of John shows that at least some children *can* learn to read by themselves. How many *do* we have no way of knowing. We know that many do read—signs as they ride in the family car, labels in the kitchen, headlines in the newspaper, and especially TV commercials. Unfortunately, in many cases parents take no notice, not believing early reading to be possible, and so they fail to encourage and thus reinforce their children's early reading.

Let me mention in passing two more cases of young children who, without instruction, learned to read.

Kay, daughter of the Goodmans, well-known reading researchers now at the University of Arizona, was surrounded by a rich language environment: reading, singing, nursery rhymes, oral language games, but no reading instruction. When she was five and a half years old, she was reading independently. One year later, she was reading at the fifth-grade level and was an accurate speller.[10]

Fries (1963) mentions in a footnote that Dr. Henry Bradley, a senior editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, learned to read by watching and listening to his father read from the Bible as he moved his finger along the lines of print. But since the boy sat opposite his father around the corner of the table, he learned to read upside down.[11]

Durkin (1966) reports that thirty-eight of the forty-nine early readers she studied had little or no direct instruction from their parents, but most of the early readers' parents had read to them, answered their questions, and shown that reading is an enjoyable pastime for adults (pp. 54–55). "Perhaps, like other attitudes," comments Durkin, "early interest in becoming a reader is as much 'caught' as taught" (p. 95). The usual pattern is that early readers have not only been read to but have received various forms of encouragement and assistance. Kay Past (1975) cites a number of cases.

Terman (1918), the well-known psychologist interested in gifted children, published an account by the father (name unnoted) of Martha S. in which he describes her early stimulation. Before she reached her first birthday, large alphabet letters were attached to the wall, pointed at, and named for her. Later, words were introduced in the same way. It was a game for her to identify them and she was praised when she succeeded. To increase the fun, her father carried in his pocket cards with letters and words on them, and it was great sport for her to "find" them and identify them. "At 21 months, she first realized that sentences in a homemade book expressed a thought: she read, 'I see mama' under a photograph of her mother" (p. 223). At two years of age she had a reading vocabulary of about 200 words; three and a half months later she could read over 700 words and had read four school primers. Her father commented, "I am much impressed with the idea that the limits of the baby mind have never been sounded" (p. 226).

Mayme Cohan, a former primary grade teacher, recounts (1961:506) that her daughter Cindy, aged two and a half, demanded her "own words." The mother printed such words as *Cindy* and *baby* in half-inch letters on four-by-six-inch cards, and Cindy read them delightedly. The mother supplied two new words a day for two weeks; then suddenly Cindy lost interest and the game was discontinued. A month later,

however, she read all the word cards with only three errors and requested more words. Later, Cindy would play for ten to fifteen minutes a day with a scrapbook made by her mother, which combined Cindy's reading vocabulary into simple sentences printed under pictures. Cohan noted that Cindy would read only when interested; otherwise, she gave deliberately wrong answers (p. 506).

William Fowler (1962a, 1962b, 1963), a student of cognitive learning and giftedness in infancy and early childhood, describes an experiment in early reading with his daughter Velia. From birth on, Velia was talked to frequently and was shown interesting objects. She learned the alphabet from letter blocks by the age of twenty months. When she was two, Fowler began reading with her using simple words of interest to Velia. He printed these words on flash cards, first in large 1½-inch letters and later with 3/16-inch letters, and they played word games with these cards daily from a few minutes to an hour. Fowler experimented early with reading readiness materials but found that the testing approach involved did not appeal to a young child. He concluded that "training in 'readiness' would have postponed the beginning of reading without contributing materially to her progress in learning to read" (1962b:157). After four and a half months Velia was able to read seventy-three words and was ready to read preprimers. Fowler noted that she identified words by means of initial and final letters and word length. About this time Fowler tried to give Velia phonics training, but she resisted, preferring a casual, spontaneous approach to reading. After seven and a half months of reading Velia entered a nursery school, where unfortunately she lost interest in reading, showing only intermittent interest for the next two years. Her interest increased at age four and a half and by age five and a half she read a great variety of books on her own. Fowler reported later (1963:104) that at age ten Velia was doing well in school, achieving at one grade ahead of her age,

had a broad range of interests, and was reading three or more full-length teen-age books a week.

Felicity Hughes (1971), an elementary school teacher, was, like Ragnhild Söderbergh, inspired by Doman's book to "teach" her daughters to read early. When she began, her elder daughter, Helen, was three years and three months of age and Gwynneth, the younger, was two years old. Gwynneth showed even greater interest in reading than Helen. Hughes read frequently to her daughters, holding the book so that they could see the text and pointing out new words to help them increase their reading vocabularies. How long Helen took to read independently Hughes does not mention, but Gwynneth broke the code after only eight months of reading. After each girl had read her first book, Hughes began to teach the phonetic analysis of words by means of a game approach. When Helen was five, Hughes began teaching her to write, but three-year-old Gwynneth insisted on learning, too. And, like Astrid Söderbergh, both Hughes girls were able to spell accurately.

Robert Lado, a linguist, played reading games with his hearing-impaired daughter María who was 2:8 years old (1972). He began with single words, then progressed to phrases and short sentences, always matched with pictures to ensure understanding. At the age of 4:7, María "did not read freely," but had "read aloud with comprehension some 500 different words in 25 little books" (p. 5). She could spell and write her name and such words as *cat*, *rat*, and *fat*. María entered kindergarten and was able to participate in many activities with children of normal hearing. Lado believes that María's early reading was a positive contribution to her progress.[12]

W. Ragan Callaway of the Anchorage School District Audio-Visual Services and Alaska Pacific University and a student of the biological foundations of language "taught" his son to read early (1973). When the boy was twenty months old, Callaway presented him the first three letters of the alphabet one

night and was delighted when the boy recognized them the next day. Within a month he had learned all the letters of the alphabet. Callaway then began presenting him single words, and in the next eight months the boy learned 200 words and acquired a rudimentary knowledge of phonics. He then "suddenly discovered 'how to read sentences' and on his own initiative began reading simple books" (p. 21). Spontaneously he read four to five hours a day and added 600 words to his recognition vocabulary. By the age of three he had a reading vocabulary of 800 words and "tested at the third-grade level on several standardized reading tests" (p. 21).

Danny and Miho Steinberg have set a kind of record in initiating their son Kimio to reading at age six months (1975). They divided the reading program into four phases: (1) alphabet familiarization; (2) alphabet identification; (3) word, phrase, and sentence identification; and (4) text reading.

Phase One: Alphabet Familiarization. The first phase was begun during Kimio's sixth month as soon as he could sit up with support, recognize familiar faces, and understand the names of familiar objects, but before he could speak.

> The upper-case letters, 2 inches in height, were printed in red with a felt-tipped pen on two strips of white paper (3 inches x 24 inches) and taped inside the footboard of *K*'s crib. The lower-case letters were printed on similar strips of paper and taped to the headboard of the crib. The lower-case letters were 1 inch (for a, c, m, etc.) or 1 ½ inches (for b, t, j, etc.) in height. (p. 200)

Several times a day the Steinbergs would point to letters and name them. Sometimes they would hold Kimio's finger and point it to a letter as it was named. Sessions were kept short, from two to five minutes, and generally totaled no more than ten minutes a day. By age sixteen months Kimio would identify most of the lower case letters, and by twenty-one months he could identify all the letters, both upper case and lower case.

Phase Two: Alphabet identification. In the second phase, that of alphabet identification, the objective was to discriminate letters visually. Kimio "was considered to be ready to begin this phase when he could point to an object in response to hearing its name" (p. 201).

> *K* was in his eighth month when he was considered ready. At that time he could consistently point or look toward his father in response to "Where's Daddy?" or touch his stuffed clown in response to "Where's Mister Clown?"
>
> Sessions of the second phase generally proceeded as follows: the *Es* [Experimenters] would ask a question such as "Where is Vee" (V) and then help *K* to respond by pointing his finger to the letter, saying, "Here is Vee." Then they would repeat the question and pause to let *K* point to the letter. Whenever he gave a correct response, he would be rewarded as much as possible with words and actions such as "Perfect!", "Right!", or a smile or a hug. While at first *K* required assistance in making the pointing response, later he was able to make the response on his own. When he made mistakes in pointing, as he frequently did at first, the *Es* would take his finger and point it at the correct letter. Eventually *K* learned to point to letters simply on the basis of their names, without first having the *Es* point them out. Each session, of which there were generally 4 or 5 per day, lasted 3 to 5 minutes. A total of 20 minutes per day was rarely exceeded . . . (pp. 201–2).
>
> At 12 months *K* could identify the cards for the words *boy, car, baby,* and *girl* by selecting a particular card from a set of four. . . . By 24 months *K* could identify 48 words, phrases, and sentences. . . . By his 30th month, *K* could read 181 different items. (p. 207)

Phase Three: Word, Phrase, and Sentence Identification. If Kimio could understand the meaning of a spoken word, phrase, or sentence, he was considered ready to learn to read it, the objective of phase three. When Kimio was ten months old, he showed that he understood certain spoken words and phrases. The sentence "Shall we go bye-bye?" sent him rushing to the

door. And he could point to any one of several objects in response to "Where is?" questions. At this point the Steinbergs remind us that it is not necessary to be able to say something in order to be able to read it.

> The crucial aspect of this phase involves the learning of the first word. Until now *K* has learned that certain speech sounds are used to refer to certain objects in the environment, e.g., that the speech sound "boy" and the object "boy" are associated, and that the speech sound "Ay" and the visual object "A" are associated. What must be learned next is that certain combinations of letters are used to represent certain words of the language and their meanings. (p. 202)

To establish a close relationship between printed words and the objects they represent, the Steinbergs fastened four pictures to the walls of Kimio's bedroom, each with a printed word beneath. The words selected, *baby, car, boy,* and *girl,* were Kimio's favorites. To stimulate Kimio's interest further, the Steinbergs would talk about the pictures several times a day. Kimio was trained to point to the picture or to the printed word when the word was spoken. Once a response was established, the picture was removed and only the label retained. *Boy* was the first printed word to be learned, followed in turn by *car, baby,* and *girl.* From then on, new items were presented only in printed form. "Once *K* had acquired the critical idea that a printed form represents a word, association with the original objects evidently was no longer necessary" (p. 203). Thus was the four-part relationship established between object, picture, speech sound, and printed word.

Phase three procedure was as follows: The *Es* moved their index fingers from left to right across printed words when reading and encouraged Kimio to imitate them. "Soon *K* would move his eyes in a left to right direction whenever he looked at words" (p. 203). Word cards were made for each word, phrase, or sentence. "New cards were made to commemorate any new

experience of *K*'s" (p. 203), but no card was made for words that Kimio did not understand when spoken. The cards were then used to play word games; "e.g., Where does it say helicopter?" (p. 204). Kimio would be praised if he picked the right card or urged to try again if he picked the wrong card.

> When *K* began to speak and was able to say the words on the cards, he was not discouraged from doing so. Sometimes, the *Es* would hold up cards and ask *K* to verbally identify them. *K* enjoyed any such variation.
>
> A reading session with the cards would last anywhere from 2 to 15 minutes depending on *K*'s interest. In general, less than 15 minutes per day were spent in reading sessions during this phase. (p. 204)

Phase Four: Text Reading. In this final phase Kimio learned to read "sequences of two or more sentences which are related in some meaningful way" (p. 204). Beginning at about age six months, Kimio was given cloth picture books with no text. At twelve months he graduated to picture books with a single word, phrase, or sentence under each picture. By twenty months his books consisted of a picture on each page with a sentence or two of text. When Kimio was twenty-six months old the text in his books increased to two to ten sentences per page and the text was connected to form a story.

"For purely practical reasons," this final phase was not begun until Kimio was speaking fluently and could read aloud. "*K* was 33 months when this phase was seriously initiated" (p. 204). Cards were made for many of the words, phrases, or sentences in Kimio's favorite books in order to familiarize him with some of the vocabulary before teaching him to read the text.

> In general, to introduce a new book, the *Es* would first read the entire text aloud to *K*, commenting on the story and asking questions about it in order to increase his interest in it. They usually pointed as they read. Then they would go back through the book reading one line or sentence at a time, allowing *K* to repeat what

> they had just read. *K* would then be asked to read some of these sentences without prior prompting being given. He was praised when an item was read correctly. . . . To make sure *K* could read independently and was not just reciting from memory, occasionally the *Es* would point to lines in the text at random and ask what was written. . . . (pp. 205–206)
>
> By his 27th month *K* could read a few simple books aloud. Among these were those in the Beginner Book series (Random House): Dr. Seuss's *Hop on Pop; One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish;* and *Green Eggs and Ham.* By the time *K* was 3 years seven months old, he could, at first sight, read correctly about two-thirds or three-quarters of a book of this type. . . . (p. 210)
>
> When, by the age of four, *K* was often able to read new books on his own without prior help, the *Es* role changed from that of active teaching to one of passive supporting. (pp. 205–206)

Evaluation. "*K*'s reading performance was formally assessed on three occasions, when he was 3 years 6 months, 4 years 11 months, and 7 years 11 months" (p. 206). For details of these evaluations the reader is referred to the Steinbergs' article. I shall simply quote one paragraph:

> In summary, this final evaluation shows that on most tests of oral and silent reading, *K*'s reading performance at the age of 7:11 was at least equivalent to the average performance of children in the middle of their sixth grade year; i.e., age 11:6. *K* ranks in the 99th percentile among students in grade 7. His performance on tests of reading speed and accuracy is at least the equivalent of the average performance of students in the middle of their eleventh grade year. *K* was in the third grade at the time the tests were administered. (p. 215)

The Steinbergs have demonstrated in the case of Kimio that a child can master at least the early stages of reading before speaking. Donald G. Emery maintains a contrasting thesis (1975), namely, that the normal average child has learned to speak by age four and that this is therefore the proper time to teach him how to read. An educator of more than thirty years of experience

when he published his book in 1975, including superintendencies in Scarsdale, New York, and Shaker Heights, Ohio, Emery was serving as Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Port Chester, New York. In addition he had directed the National Reading Center in Washington, D.C. Beginning with the title, *Teach Your Preschooler to Read*, this book is thoroughly didactic throughout; its purpose is to persuade its readers, parents primarily, to eliminate the two years of wasted time between a child's fourth birthday and entrance to first grade by teaching the child to read. Among ample evidence cited to support his viewpoint is a case I have not seen reported elsewhere, namely, that of Karl Witte.[13]

Karl was the son of a minister in the German town of Lochau. Mistrustful of the local schoolmaster, Pastor Witte planned himself, together with his wife, to undertake the education of Karl. He began by showing the young boy books and pictures and taking him out for walks, always talking about what they saw. "After discussing some picture books with Karl, his parents would conclude with the wistful expression, 'Oh, if you only knew how to read!' " (Emery 1975:78; Bruce, 1914:223). That did it. When Karl was three, he began expressing interest in reading. Pastor Witte responded by buying several sets of wooden letters three inches high, and for about fifteen minutes a day both parents would play with Karl. They would draw a letter out of the box at random, examine it, name it, talk about it, and hand it around. When Karl was able to identify a letter by name, he was praised. "As a result of this 'game,' Karl acquired mastery of all the letters in several weeks and moved on to forming syllables with their sounds and then words" (Emery, 78–79). At four Karl was forming sentences, and this led to the "purchase of books appropriate to his skill" (p. 79).

> Even though his father insisted that the lad was not particularly precocious, he provided him with a broad educational program. As

> a result, when Karl was nine he had learned five languages. At the age of fourteen he was certified for a doctorate at the University of Leipzig. (p. 79)

Emery comments that "Pastor Witte's teaching, though it is exceptional in its concentration, dramatizes the parents' opportunity to manage the environment of their child to obtain positive educational results" (p. 78).

Another guide to early reading appearing in 1975 was Sidney Ledson's *Teach Your Child to Read in 60 Days*. Though the title tends to put one off, the book is full of good background information[14] and is written with verve. Ledson is a free-lance writer and artist who was born in London and now lives in Ottawa. A single parent, Ledson undertook to teach his two daughters (ages two and a half and four) to read. His purpose was "to let the children enjoy stories at bedtime; it's a nice part of childhood" (p. 13). Though he wanted to provide this pleasure for them, he was, after feeding, washing, and bedding the girls, "usually too tired or in too poor a mood to read fairy tales. The next best thing, therefore, was to teach the girls to read their own bedtime stories" (p. 13).

> Eight months after their reading lessons began, Eve and Jean read sixty-two books in a two-week period, fifty-six of which they had never seen before. How many parents could find the time to read a similar amount to their children and, incidentally, find the patience to read them *The Three Little Pigs* exuberantly for the tenth time?" (p. 59)

Ledson, who readily concedes that he had no preparation for teaching, nevertheless reveals himself to be a self-taught teacher of considerable resourcefulness and imagination. Improvising play methods as he went along, he succeeded in teaching both girls 186 words singly or in sentences formed with the same words, so that at the end of sixty days Ledson felt that the girls had learned the essentials of reading and now needed only to

increase their vocabulary and continue to practice reading. In the next two years they read 300 books and seemed permanently "hooked" on reading.

The year 1975 saw the appearance of a third book on early reading. Smethurst's *Teaching Young Children to Read at Home*. Smethurst holds an Ed.D. degree from Harvard, is one of the cofounders of the Paideia School in Atlanta, and directs the Reading Center at Emory University. His book, the most substantial of the contemporary books,[15] is also admirably judicious in tone. He shares the cautious approach of Dolores Durkin, whose research he admires, and he endorses (p. 45) her opinion that:

> Whether or not a child is ready depends upon his particular abilities, but also upon the reading instruction that will be offered. . . . There is no room for thinking that there is one best age for starting reading; no room for thinking there is one best methodology and one best set of materials. Nor, certainly, is there a place for thinking that all children must accomplish the same learning at the same time. (Durkin, 1970:534, 564)

His chapters two, three, and four constitute an excellent review of the literature. In them he cites many cases of early reading, e.g., Jean-Paul Sartre (p. 27),[16] C.S. Forester (p. 27),[17] Harry Truman (p. 27),[18] and Scout in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (pp. 28–29).

Even the second half of the book, "A Step-by-Step Program You Can Follow at Home," is interlarded with references and useful suggestions, all presented in relaxed fashion and suggestive of the pleasure to be found in reading to and with one's children. Finally there is "A Buyer's Guide to Teaching and Learning Materials for Home Instruction," "A Reading List for Parent-Teachers," and nine pages of intelligently selected references.

Among the many interesting features of Smethurst's book is a section on "Reading Instruction via Communications," in

which he appraises not only such popular programs as "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" but also several less well-known programs, of which I shall mention three.

The Denver Public Schools conducted in 1961–62 an educational television experiment to determine "how effectively parents can prepare their preschool children for reading" (Brzienski and Hayman, 1962:1; Smethurst: 70). Brzienski and Hayman reported that parents could teach preschool children "certain basic skills of beginning reading, provided they are about four and one-half years of age or older" (p. 27; Smethurst: 70). They found that practice was important, that children who were read to—whether they did the lessons or not—showed improvement (p. 27; Smethurst: 70). Best results were obtained by those "who practiced . . . more than thirty minutes a week and had been read to more than sixty minutes a week" (pp. 27–28).

Harvey Neil Perlish reported in 1968 on the results of "an investigation of the effectiveness of a television reading program, along with parental home assistance, in helping three-year-old children learn to read" (Smethurst: 74).

> Perlish developed a children's reading program for Philadelphia education television station, WFIL-TV, then went on to study the children who watched it. The program was called "Wordland Workshop," and it featured a hostess named Miss Irene, and a ticklish kangaroo—Wendy Wallaby—whose pouch yielded words to be read. There was also a magic word tree, plus word games, stories, poems, puppets, trips to the zoo, and what Perlish describes as "merry banter" between Wendy Wallaby and Miss Irene (Smethurst, 74).

After thirty-nine weeks the experimental group of 134 three-year-olds was compared with a control group of 162 three-year-olds who had spent an equal amount of time watching "Captain Kangaroo." The experimental group scored significantly

higher than the controls on a test of reading performance. Perlish concludes that:

> With children similar to those in the experimental group, a carefully produced television reading program, along with parental home assistance, may indeed be effective in helping them learn to read. A consensus of participating parents disclosed that the children had apparently enjoyed the TV reading program and their home-conducted reinforcement activities. (p. 2155A; Smethurst, 74–75)

From August through November 1964 the *Chicago Tribune* and a score of other U.S. newspapers published a comic strip called "Short Cuts to Reading You Can Teach Your Child." This was created by Joan Beck,[19] child care columnist for the *Tribune*, and was adapted from Dorothy Taft Watson's *Listen and Learn with Phonics* (1961). This thirteen-week series showed parents how to teach little children to read by a simple phonetic method. "Since 1964, more than 200,000 reprints of the comic strip have been sold by the *Tribune*" (Smethurst: 36).

> A year later, a mother in a small northern Illinois town sent this letter to mark the anniversary of the *Tribune*'s series, an event which she said "is celebrated at our house by much reading."
>
> Mrs. John M. Sullivan wrote:
>
> I doubt if you are fully aware of the door to a world of knowledge which the *Tribune* opened to children in the Chicagoland area. I do not see how you can begin to imagine the hesitant and curious way in which two of my little girls and I opened that door. Our doubt and curiosity soon gave way to an overwhelming enthusiasm and eagerness.
>
> The older little girl started first grade this fall, reading as well as her second and third grade brothers. Our four-year-old spends many happy hours each week educating and entertaining herself. In our home there are no longer moans of "What can I do now, Mommy?"
>
> My two little daughters and I have developed an understanding and a closeness that I never dreamed possible from our

> association in the field of education—an unexpected bonus from the reading-strips. I am looking forward to the same delightful experience of opening the door to learning for my other two babies and only wish, dear *Tribune*, that you had been around when *the eight older ones were small*. (Beck, 1967:142)

Smethurst also reviews some empirical studies, of which I shall select two for brief analysis: the 1969 report by Morrison, Harris, and Auerbach, and Dolores Durkin's two famous longitudinal studies (1966).

The CRAFT Project[20] was a large-scale comparison between two approaches to beginning reading conducted in twelve New York City elementary schools. Coming out of that study and published separately from the project report was the comparison of early and non-early readers prepared by Morrison, Harris, and Auerbach. At the beginning of the project 58 children out of 1,378 entering first grade (i.e., 4.2%) were labeled "early readers," that is, children who could "identify words in print, no matter how few," from a list of words on the Detroit Word Recognition Test (Smethurst: 71). "By the end of the first grade the early readers scored significantly higher than the group total on all five subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test" (p. 71), and "By the end of the second grade, early readers had an advantage over the larger group, which they maintained at the end of the third grade" (p. 71).

Morrison et al. drew the following conclusions from these two related studies:

> What all the foregoing suggests is that some disadvantaged children who enter first grade have some word recognition skill which they have acquired in the home, or from some form of preschool education other than public kindergarten. This finding appears to substantiate previous research studies on the subject of early readers. It also reinforces a finding by Durkin that some children from homes other than those identified as being in the middle or upper socioeconomic income level do enter first grade with measurable reading abilities.

> In addition, the present study indicates that, as far as the children in the CRAFT project were concerned, the advantages that they maintained at the beginning of the study persisted and grew throughout the three years of the study. Indeed, through the years early readers tended to increase their achievement advantage over the total CRAFT population, as well as over the matched group, indicating that reading skills taught prior to the time the child enters first grade are not detrimental to long-range achievement. (1969:19–20; Smethurst:73)

Durkin's first study (1966) was sparked by the chance discovery of a first grader in an Oakland school who was reading during the "reading-readiness" period of first grade. On being tested, Midge was found to be reading at a grade level of 4.2 and to have an IQ of 148. Interviews with Midge's parents revealed that she had concealed her reading ability throughout kindergarten and the beginning of first grade because "reading was *not* what other children were doing" (p. 1). Durkin learned that Midge had learned to read by herself by asking many questions about words.

The following year Durkin and a coworker tested all 5,103 children entering first grade in twenty-seven Oakland schools and found that 49 or slightly less than one percent (.0096) could be designated as early readers on the basis of their performance on two tests: *Primary Word Recognition* and *Primary Paragraph Reading*. "The results were individual median scores ranging from 1.5 to 4.5 on a grade-level norm scale. The median grade score for the total group of 49 subjects at the time was 1.9" (p. 16).

Reading achievement scores for the early readers were kept each year from the end of grade one to the end of grade six. Results were as follows (in simplified form):

Date of Testing	Reading Grade-Level	
	Median	Range
May 1959, Grade 1 (N = 49)	3.7	2.3–5.6
May 1960, Grade 2 (N = 49)	4.9	3.3–8.9
May 1961, Grade 3 (N = 49)	5.3	4.4–10.6
May 1962, Grade 4 (N = 49)	6.7	4.8–11.2
May 1963, Grade 5 (N = 49)	7.6	5.0–11.7
May 1964, Grade 6 (N = 34)*	9.0	5.2–12.3

*"Because 15 of the original subjects had been double-promoted, only 34 were still in elementary school in the last year of the study" (Durkin, 1966:21).

"For all of the 38 subjects in this study who did not have someone in their family who deliberately planned to teach them to read early, preschool help was given primarily because of their overt curiosity about written words and numbers" (p. 55).

In the New York Study, Durkin was able to add information concerning non-early readers which was lacking in the California Study. This second study was conducted in the first grades of forty New York City schools. The population numbered 4,465 children (3,523 Caucasians, 814 Blacks, and 128 Orientals), of whom 157 passed both tests used to determine early readers (reduced by one dropout to 156) or 3.5% of the total population tested. The grade-level reading scores for these children ranged from 1.4 to 5.2 with a median of 2.0. Their IQs ranged from 82 to 170 with a median of 133 (p. 74).

The reading progress of 156 early readers over a three-year period is indicated in the following simplified table:

Date of Testing	Reading Grade-Level	
	Median	Range
Sept. 1961	2.0	1.4–5.2
May 1962	3.7	2.3–7.2
May 1963	5.1	3.0–8.7
May 1964	6.1	3.4–11.2

The Intelligence Quotient Data for Early Readers

Subjects		Range	Median
Boys + Girls	(N = 156)	82–170	133
Boys	(N = 77)	82–163	133
Girls	(N = 79)	94–170	134

(Durkin, 1966:80)

Durkin's interviews with the New York families reveal in the indicated percentages significant differences between families of early readers and those of non-early readers, e.g. (pp. 93–101):

More mothers of early readers said they read more often than the average adult (83–33).

More early readers were read to at home, prior to entering school (100–73).

Fewer mothers of early readers believed that reading ought to be taught by a trained person (30–70).

More mothers of early readers said that parents should give help with skills like reading to preschool children (100–50).

More early readers were described as being adept in activities that could be characterized as "quiet" (63–37).

Fewer early readers played with toys (7–40).

More early readers, when playing with other children, participated in quiet games (70–43).

More early readers liked to play alone (80–37).

In a week's time, fewer early readers watched television for six hours or more (70–93).

As a result of watching television, more early readers developed a curiosity about written words (53–10).

Fewer early readers watched programs of the nursery-school-kindergarten type (60–80).

Fewer early readers were described as being interested in first grade (60–87).

Fewer parents of the early readers expressed satisfaction with the way schools teach reading (53–73).

More early readers showed preschool interest in learning to read (100–73).

More parents of early readers attributed preschool interest in reading partly to:

availability of paper and pencils in the home (83–18).
availability of reading materials in the home (73–14).
availability of a blackboard in the home (57–23).
interest in the meaning of words (47–9).

More parents of early readers gave preschool help with:

printing (93–73).
identification of written words (91–27).
the meaning of words (77–27).
spelling (73–27).
the sounds of letters (67–27).

Age of Initial Interest	Early Readers (N = 30)	Non-Early Readers (N = 22)
Less than 3	17%	9%
3	33	32
4	50	41
5	0	18

Concluding her chapter on family interviews in the second New York Study (Durkin, 1966:100), Durkin writes:

> In some ways, the phrase "sheer joy" provides an appropriate introduction for a general conclusion that derives from the experience of interviewing the 60 New York parents and from the 60 reaction reports [which Durkin typed after each interview]. Perhaps the conclusion is "nothing more than common sense" in its contention that early readers are not some unique species capable of being identified and sorted by tests. Rather, it would seem, their preschool achievement in reading is the combined expression of themselves, their parents, and the kinds of environment these parents provided. Such a conclusion also suggests, of course, that the combination of factors which led to preschool reading might also help to account for the fact that, over the years, the early readers in this research continued to show higher achievement in reading than the non-early-readers with whom they were matched. (p. 110)

Another conspicuous case of early learning, especially early reading, is that of Edith Stern, described in considerable detail by her father, Aaron Stern, in two books, *The Making of a Genius* (1971) and *The Joy of Learning* (1977). A Jew born in Poland, Aaron Stern made "an impossible escape" from the Nazis and finally found his way as a war refugee to the United States, where he married and raised two children, Edith and David. The story of his constant battle against poor health, his struggle to consolidate his education in English, but, above all, his notable success in educating his daughter is told with passion in these two volumes.

Both children learned to read before age two. It is Edith's learning that is described, for Aaron's long stays in the hospital prevented his attending to David's education with the same care as Edith's.

Stern's Total Educational Submersion Method, as he calls it, consists of spending much time with the children, talking, reading, playing, answering questions, and exposing them to a great variety of experiences. For example, while the family lived in the New York area, Stern decreed that the radio should be turned on continuously to Station WQXR, which plays classical music twenty-four hours a day interspersed with news bulletins. He specified, "Let the volume be merely audible when the baby is asleep and louder when she is awake, but by all means let the child be always exposed to fine music" (1977: 29).

> By the time she was ten weeks old, her crib was filled with meaningful toys and illustrated books. Her dolls had social significance as they were of many races obtained from the gift shop of the United Nations. . . . There was also a great variety of animal pictures from the Bronx Zoo and flashcards of the numbers from one to ten. These were never removed from her crib. (p. 31)

When Edith was one and a half years old, the family acquired from a neighbor that was moving away a grand piano and an old

twenty-four-volume *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Edith asked for "the big book," sat on the floor, and began leafing through the pages (p. 42). The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* became "an effective tool" (p. 42), and "in less than three years she had read it all from A to Z" (p. 43). Stern initiated Edith into math by means of an old abacus which cost $1.80 (p. 43).

Concerning Edith's reading Stern notes the following stages: "Her ability to identify letters was evident when she was twelve to thirteen months" (p. 44). She had a collection of some fifteen books, which she was very fond of leafing through and "judging by the expression on her face, [she] appeared to understand the contents at the age of one and perhaps earlier" (p. 45). When Edith was eighteen months, Stern introduced flashcards to her. "She began to read at the age of twenty-two months" (p. 44). Looking for ways to improve her reading, Stern found advertising signs to be most useful as he put her in a stroller and took his long daily walk (p. 45). This was a game that appealed to the neighborhood children, many of whom accompanied them (p. 49). When the advertising messages became too objectionable, Stern turned to books and magazines (p. 51). Edith became an avid reader and while still two read better than "many children three times her age" (p. 41). Edith's reading opened new horizons and one of her favorite books became a "children's version of the Old Testament" (p. 54).

As Edith's mind matured, "she began to interact with adults," and Stern records an interesting interview with Albert Einstein when Edith was three (pp. 56–57).

Shortly after this time Stern was admitted to Brooklyn College to continue his education. He occasionally took Edith to class with him and involved her in his learning experiences (p. 59). Taking after his daughter, Aaron Stern "completed a four-year college program in one year and a month" (p. 68).

After graduation Stern got a teaching position and invited

Edith to attend his lectures (p. 69). She was then four and was reading two or three books a day (p. 65).

"Edith," asked Aaron one day, "how does a car run?"

"I don't know, Daddy."

So Aaron used the last two dollars he had in his pocket to take Edith on one of her first automobile rides in a taxi. Circling Coney Island, he explained to her all he knew about the dynamics of automobiles. "By the time we arrived home, Edith knew more about a car than many adults" (p. 62).

At six Edith entered first grade in St. Petersburg, but her school experiences were "uneventful and boring" (p. 84). Later that year the family moved to North Miami Beach, where Edith was permitted to skip a grade. "This however did not decrease her boredom" (p. 85).

When Edith was eight, her father managed to get her admitted to the fourth grade of a Far Rockaway, Long Island school, but her boredom continued (p. 95).

At age eleven Edith entered junior high school but was no longer permitted to skip grades (p. 101). "In spite of the boredom at school, Edith's junior high school days were a period of great intellectual growth. Her thirst for knowledge was insatiable, covering every branch of the arts and sciences. We would discuss and debate jurisprudence, semantics and philosophy" (p. 102).

When Edith was twelve and in the ninth grade, her father resolved to put an end to her public school education and sought a way to have her admitted directly to college (p. 106). Frustrated at the University of Miami, Stern succeeded, after many rebuffs, in having her admitted to Miami-Dade Junior College (pp. 107–108). Asked after the first day how it was, Edith replied, "Perhaps it was less boring, but I still managed to finish a science fiction book" (p. 109). Edith finished the two-year junior college sequence in a year and a half with an A average (p. 112).

After graduation from Miami-Dade Junior College Edith entered Florida Atlantic University as a junior. She was then fourteen (p. 113). Here she was much happier, was well adjusted, and enjoyed a rich and full social life (p. 128).

"The County Board of Public Instruction which had resisted my efforts to take Edith out of school suddenly decided to award her an honorary high school diploma, the first in their history" (p. 130).

At age sixteen Edith received her B.A. degree (p. 149) with a concentration in mathematics, entered the Graduate School at Michigan State University and was appointed instructor in mathematics (p. 152). Within two years she was awarded her master's degree in theoretical mathematics and completed almost all the course requirements for the Ph.D. degree (p. 161).

And there at age eighteen, on the threshold of a Ph.D., Stern leaves the story of Edith hanging, but it has been an inspiring story and will undoubtedly continue in the same vein. Aaron, his wife Bella, and Edith have together built a solid foundation for what will surely be a useful and satisfying life.

The foregoing accounts of early reading are far from exhaustive. Cases could be multiplied. My hope is that they will suffice, however, to help the general reader overcome the myth that young children—very young children—cannot or should not be initiated into reading as soon as they are ready and that they are often ready before parents are ready, at age four, three, two, or even earlier. I also nourish the hope that the cases cited will help professional educators to banish once and for all the myth that children are not ready to read until they have attained a mental age of six and a half.

III. Preschool Reading and the Bilingual Child

If a monolingual child can get a headstart by learning to read before going to school, why can't a bilingual child get a double headstart by learning to read two languages before entering school? No one would deny the educational importance of skill in reading; nor would many deny the advantage of a knowledge of two spoken languages. The theoretical advantage of knowing how to read and write in two languages would seem to be self-evident, and yet biliteracy is rarely emphasized as an objective in our schools. This is an intriguing fact. Is there perchance a parallel between this fact and that other widely recognized fact that illiteracy and semiliteracy are common in our schools? If early readers rarely have difficulties in school, can we assume that bilingual children too would have no difficulties if they learned how to read in two languages before entering school? Personally I like Chester Christian's statement and implied solution of the problem:

> In an important sense, the education of those who speak two languages can never be "equal" to the education of monolinguals; it must be inferior or superior. Whether it will be the one or the other depends heavily on whether literacy is provided in only one or in both languages. (1976:38)

In order to examine more closely the problem of educational

biliteracy, I shall first present three cases of preschool biliteracy, as described by parents Al and Kay Past, Chester Christian, and Ok Ro Lee.

Mariana and Elena Past Learn to Read English and Spanish

Al and Kay Past, the parents of Mariana (born on 23 September 1971) and Elena (born on 22 May 1976), are bilingual. Clearly dominant in English, their mother tongue, they both acquired some familiarity with Spanish through contact with Spanish speakers in South Texas. Kay Past writes:

> Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to study Spanish until we were past the age for easy acquisition, so our present fluency has been developed with considerable effort. We hoped that, by being exposed to both languages from birth, Mariana [and Elena] would develop native fluency in both and would always enjoy the advantage of being able to communicate in both languages. (1975: 58)

Shortly before her first birthday, Mariana began to speak understandable words, among which was the word *agua* (water), pronounced /awa/. By age 1:4 her English vocabulary consisted of about fifty words compared with only six in Spanish because her language environment was predominantly English. She began producing two-word utterances at age 1:6, and "her Spanish was still active enough to contribute to an early combination 'más [more] milk.'" Clearly Mariana needed to be exposed to more Spanish, so her parents brought home several books in Spanish from a local library and began reading from them nightly. "Almost immediately she began using in her speech words and phrases from the stories: Allá está (There is) Daddy . . ." (K. Past, 1976: 59).

Mariana had been read to since the age of 0:8, but "her first personal contact with reading occurred at 1:5, when she was shown the card with the word 'mommy' on it in four inch red letters" (A. Past, 1976: 42). She learned "daddy" and the names of two of her friends in the same way, and then she

suddenly lost interest. The Pasts wisely discontinued the reading experiment. When Mariana was 1:11, they tried again. This time Mariana was excited by the "word game" and since then her interest has never slackened. She began learning words "at the rate of one a day, and soon was learning two, three, and four words a day, often demanding particular ones" (A. Past: 42).

"Shortly after her second birthday, Mariana started learning verbs, which made possible a new game, acting out the word rather than reading it aloud. The word *llora* (cries, weeps) made her so sad that it always had to be followed by a consoling *no llores* (don't cry) card" (K. Past, 1976: 61).

In the early stages she treated cards as though they were the objects they represented. "Upon learning the word 'telephone' for the first time (at 2:1) she immediately put the card to her ear and said, 'Hello, how are you?' " (A. Past: 43). She needed two or three months to realize "that written symbols represent words more than they do objects" (A. Past: 43).

The first stage of Mariana's reading, which the Pasts labeled "preanalytical reading," lasted only a month or two. During this period

> She identified each word as a whole, relating it directly to its meaning (not to its oral representation), and did not attempt to look within words for smaller ones. This was illustrated during the second and third month of reading, after she had accumulated a number of Spanish-English word pairs. She liked to say a word quickly, as soon as the card was shown to her, but not always in the right language. Shown the word *conejo*, she sometimes said "rabbit." Shown *chair*, she might say "silla," or "chair." (A. Past: 44, 48)

During her first four months of reading she learned 139 English words and 54 Spanish words, either from word cards or from signs seen while riding in the family car. In general the Pasts would make cards for the words in a particular book. Mariana would then learn these words gradually. When she had learned all the words in a book, she would be given the book.

She would then read and reread this book while learning the words in the next book.

> In the third month, analysis was becoming a necessity for Mariana. She was accumulating too many words, some of very similar appearance, to rely on each word's overall shape. . . . She had learned to recognize at least half of the letters in the alphabet, though, at 2:1, after six weeks of reading, she began noticing them in the words she read. Of the word "doe" she said "It has a daddy letter." Of the word "fine" she said "It has an F. It has a dot." Days later, seeing "four" and "five" together, she said "They both have an F. It [pointing to the *i* in "five"] has a dot." (A. Past: 49)

During her third and fourth month of reading Mariana became skilled in reading sentences. She overcame her inclination to look for familiar letters and instead noticed whole words. Then she learned to read from left to right and stopped scanning the page for interesting words. "This was probably due to accumulated practice in reading sentences as well as a desire to know the meaning of the sentence and not just its individual words" (A. Past: 50). At this time she was beginning to break the code. "As she gained more and more experience and became more interested in larger units of meaning (sentences, stories) she became more willing to make guesses when she came to a new word" (A. Past: 50).

By the time Mariana was 2:7 she no longer needed word cards. "She had no problem with functors, in or out of context, and would often search magazines and newspapers, reading out strings such as 'not, in, to, and' " (A. Past: 54).

> Two of her reading strategies were observed many times. One was to read the words in a sentence individually and in order: "I - do - not - like - the - puppy." She would then reread it immediately with the proper intonation. Another was to read a sentence several times while pointing to each word (as we did in her reading sessions). For example, she read the following sentences five times

while pointing to each word: "Pobre Pepe se cayó. Mariana dijo, 'No llores, Pepe.' " (A. Past: 54)

By age three Mariana was frequently reading independently. Some of her favorite books were *Tip and Mitten; Sally, Dick, and Jane;* and *Juguetes de colores.*

Her vocabulary development in English is illustrated by the following dialog:

> Mariana (cutting paper): I have to cut out these documents for Ray [grandfather].
> Father: Documents! Boy, you sure are a bureaucrat.
> Mariana: No, I'm *not.*
> Father: Well, you talk like one.
> Mariana: Let's not call people names. (K. Past, 1976: 66)

When Mariana was 3:6, she read a simplified version of *Three Billy Goats Gruff* with good expression on the first reading, using a squeaky voice for the goats' dialog (K. Past, 1976: 67).

To evaluate Mariana's reading level at age 3:8, informal reading inventories were used, which revealed that Mariana was reading English at the level of the average first grader in the second half of first grade.

A month later the Laidlaw Reading Series in Spanish was used to assess her reading in Spanish. Her reading corresponded to the first-year level, "possibly earlier in the year" (K. Past, 1976: 67–68).

Since her parents teach English to foreign students, Mariana is well aware of the existence of many languages and occasionally learns a word or phrase from a foreign student. After her father read the French story *La petite famille* to her one day, she wanted to attempt a few pages herself. "She pronounced *table, dans la maison, pain,* and *crocodile* correctly, but *et* was read /et/" (K. Past, 1976: 68).

At the age of four Mariana spoke "almost exclusively Spanish with Spanish speakers . . .," regularly enjoyed the Spanish television programs of *"Carrascolendas"* and *"Villa Alegre"*

and played with monolingual Spanish-speaking children at least once a week.

At age four Mariana began to take piano lessons and learned to read music with unusual speed, probably because she had already learned to decipher two symbolic systems, namely, English and Spanish.

At age 4:11 Mariana entered a bilingual kindergarten and was lucky enough to have a teacher who encouraged the children to read in both Spanish and English. At the end of the year Mariana's reading level was again assessed, and she was found to be reading English at the fourth grade level and Spanish at the second grade level.

Since the family moved to Beeville at the end of Mariana's kindergarten year, Mariana has continued to make progress in both languages, thanks to a Spanish-speaking school librarian and the continuing family reading activities. Mariana showed an early interest in writing and drawing and from the age of six began to type little stories in Spanish and English on the family typewriter.

Mariana's younger sister Elena has followed in Mariana's footsteps and may perhaps even be a little ahead of her elder sister in reading at the same age.

It appears as though the Pasts will realize their hope that both Mariana and Elena will be able to communicate easily and without accent in both Spanish and English.

How the Christian Children Learned to Read Spanish and English

When Raquel Christian was less than one year old, her father surprised her poring over an encyclopedia page without pictures and going through "all the motions of reading, including the gesture of 'Don't interrupt me; I'm busy'" (Christian, 1976: 19).

Thelma Weeks observes that "Almost every child who is read to tries the Reading Game sooner or later. The Reading Game consists simply of the child pretending he is reading. . . . Some-

times this includes a very good imitation of intonation and contours, and sometimes . . . simply a different intonation pattern from her normal one" (1979: 99). Weeks (p. 85) reproduces the recording of a child aged 3:7 pretending to read aloud. In the course of the reading, "He made up rhyming words, nonsense words, . . . used a wide range of intonation patterns and varied the speed. He was obviously enjoying himself" (pp. 85–86).

Chester and Nancy Christian's purpose for initiating their children early into reading in Spanish and English was similar to that of the Pasts:

> to provide their children the most favorable conditions possible for the learning, retention, and continuing lifetime development of a full range of abilities in at least two languages, Spanish and English. This involves, they believe, building the strongest possible foundation in the minority language before the children reach school age, including the teaching of reading and writing.
>
> To accomplish this objective, Raquel's parents decided to speak only Spanish to their children at home, although it is the second language of her father and the family lives in an English-speaking neighborhood. The children were expected to learn English as a second language largely from playmates. There is [was] no television set in the home. With respect to written language, they decided to teach reading and writing in Spanish early, so that before entering school the children would be literate in Spanish. It was assumed that by this time they would have learned to understand spoken English.
>
> These language policies were chosen for practical, psychological, and sociocultural reasons, with the purpose of giving the children highly developed capabilities in at least two languages, motivation to use each of them as permanent vehicles of spoken and written expression, favorable attitudes toward those who speak each of them, and a deep understanding of the sociocultural value system associated with each, with preference given to Spanish as a vehicle of personal experience and relationships, and to English for the manipulation of cognitive structures. (Christian, 1977a: 95)

When Raquel was eighteen months old, her parents bought her an alphabet book in Spanish but without any intention of teaching her to read (Christian, 1977b: 530). Curiously enough, Raquel asked the names of the letters "much more frequently than she asked the names of the objects they represented" (p. 530). She made such rapid progress learning the names of the letters that her father "began teaching her two-letter combinations, and by the time she was twenty-six months old, she could read at least twenty-seven words" (p. 530) of two, three, and four letters. Her father began writing two-word combinations and then fitted these combinations into short sentences, e.g., *Mi mamá/es bonita* (My mommy is pretty); *Mi papá/me asusta* (My daddy scares me); *El avión/es grande* (The airplane is big). "She responded to some of these sentences with a great deal of feeling." Shown the words *Mi hermano/es feo* (My brother is ugly), she exclaimed "¡No! ¡No es feo! ¡No es feo! (No, he's not ugly)" (pp. 530–531). Unlike Raquel, Aurelio, who was sixteen months younger than his sister, "learned to read words without first learning the alphabet" (p. 531). By the age of two he could read at least twenty words, "including the names of members of the family and friends, and of some of his favorite objects, such as *carro* [car] and *avión* [plane]" (p. 531). Christian formed the opinion "that the initial learning of the alphabet in Spanish was in the long run much more effective than the initial learning of words" (p. 531). Aurelio took no interest in the alphabet until much later. Consequently, "when he forgot a word, he had to relearn it." Raquel, on the other hand, "could always sound out words she had forgotten, but also new words, which she could then read without their being taught specifically" (p. 531).

"Neither [child] had much interest in reading books of any length until Raquel was five. . . ." (p. 531). Then suddenly she discovered "that she could read books which were much longer [than those with one or two sentences to a page], and began doing so regularly" (p. 531). At the same time she "began

reading books aloud to Aurelio, and he thereupon lost much of his interest in reading for himself" (p. 531).

It is generally agreed that children have to learn how to read only once and that this ability can then be transferred from one language to another. When Raquel and Aurelio entered school, "they learned quickly to read English," (p. 530) while they continued reading Spanish at home. "In Spanish, two of the selections they enjoy reading most at present [when they were eight and six] are the *lamento* of Segismundo [in Calderón's *La Vida es sueño*] (both children) and *A Margarita Debayle* [by Rubén Darío] (Raquel)" (p. 530). At that same age they enjoyed a wide range of reading, including translations of Walt Disney, the *Fábulas* of Iriarte and Samaniego, and, a little later, the *Rimas* of Bécquer and a simplified, illustrated version of *Don Quixote*.

> Ironically, she [Raquel] had been demanding for two years that we send her to school [One thinks of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz], and looking forward with great impatience to learning all that she would be taught. However, from the first day it seemed to her a meaningless routine, and nobody seemed to understand the significance of the fact that her home language was not English.
>
> After five months of kindergarten, Raquel could understand, speak fairly well, and read English. At that time, my wife and I were called to the school for a conference with the teacher and three school officials, who suggested strongly that we no longer speak Spanish at home; the reason given was not that she was not making satisfactory progress in English, but that "she thinks that Spanish is a better language than English, and will continue to believe that so long as her parents speak it at home." My response was that I myself consider it better for certain purposes, such as maintaining warmth, intimacy, and respect in human relationships—and for reading. This year Raquel told me, "Mi profesora no sabe que hablo español, y no le voy a decir hasta el fin del año. (My teacher doesn't know that I speak Spanish, and I'm not going to tell her until the end of the year.)" (p. 532)

As of this writing (March 1979) Raquel and Aurelio are in the fourth and third grades respectively. Their school records are nearly perfect and the only problem seems to be that Raquel has a boy classmate whom she seems not quite able to excel.

A Case of Korean/English Bilingualism and Biliteracy

The last case I shall describe is that of Yuha, the elder daughter of the Reverend Dr. Ok Ro Lee and Mrs. Lee, of Arlington, Virginia. The Lee household has three generations. Ok Ro Lee's mother is monolingual in Korean. Ok Ro Lee and his wife are bilingual but dominant in Korean. Two daughters, Yuha, the subject of her father's doctoral dissertation,[21] and Chinha, a year younger than Yuha, are nearly 50-50 bilinguals.

The Lees' goal for their children is very similar to those of the Pasts and the Christians:

> The parents want Yuha and Chinha to acquire the mastery of the two languages as coordinate linguistic systems so that they will learn the two languages on the basis of two separate referential systems, one of which is the Korean environment in the home and the other the English environment outside the home. (Lee, 1977: 90)

Yuha, born in the United States on 30 March 1971, was 4:7 at the beginning of the study and 6:5 at its conclusion. When Yuha was 2:3, she and Chinha went to Korea, where they spent a year and a half. They had spoken Korean and a little English when they went to Korea, but when they returned they spoke no English at all. Yuha had been exposed to English less than ten months when her early reading began on 1 November 1975 (p. 94). The reason that Yuha was selected as a subject rather than Chinha was that she was closer to school-entrance age, and it was therefore more urgent for her to stabilize her bilingualism.

Since Yuha's development in Korean was far in advance of her development in English, her father decided, in order to prepare her for kindergarten, to initiate her into reading in English, her weaker language (p. 101). Korean continued to be,

however, the language of family communication. Yuha liked to watch TV, especially "Sesame Street," and learned all of the letters of the English alphabet. She could also write all the capital letters before she started reading (p. 95). This was accomplished as follows: About a month before the reading experiment was begun, Yuha's parents taught her the ABC song. Yuha also received a set of alphabet blocks, with which she and her parents played such games as the following: A block would be thrown like a die and Yuha would be given a chance to name the letter on the top of the block. If she named it correctly, she was the winner; if not, the parent was the winner. The winner would get a sip of Coke. A similar game was invented to help her learn to write the letters (p. 96).

Throughout, the Lees "encouraged her [Yuha] to consider her bilingualism and biculturalism as an asset to be proud of" (p. 98). Periodically, the parents would ask Yuha, " 'Yuha, do you know why you are supposed to speak Korean and English well?' The expected answer is [was], 'Because I am a Korean living in America' " (p. 100).

Yuha learned to understand and speak Korean and English at the same time, since she was exposed to the former in the home and the latter outside (p. 102). However, she learned how to read first in English, using Robert Lado's experimental edition *Early Reading English* (1972) (p. 104). The language of instruction and explanation was Korean (p. 107).

> Reading to Yuha was a game which she enjoyed and loved to play. Sometimes she played the game of reading with her one-year-younger sister, Chinha. Yuha, playing the role of a teacher, picked up a card and asked Chinha to read it, but Chinha could not. So Yuha hinted the answer with whispering voice. Then Chinha read it aloud after Yuha, and Yuha said, "Very good, Chinha," clapping her hands as her teacher used to do with her (Yuha). (pp. 113–114)

Yuha's early reading was a great success. In about two weeks she learned all of the 100 flashcards in random order and without the aid of picture cues, and in about four weeks she could spell all 100 phrases without error. She could also write all the capital and lower-case letters. "Yuha loved to write the words she could read. Her writing skill was a by-product of her reading skill. Nobody taught her to write." She sometimes wrote in cursive, sometimes in printed form (p. 129).

"On June 15, 1977 [when Yuha was 6:2], the investigator told a story of Han Suk-Bong (1543–1605), a Korean who loved to read even during his early childhood and then became a very famous scholar" (p. 129). Early the following morning Lee found Yuha reading aloud in the living room. Lee asked her if she was not afraid of waking up the rest of the family. "She answered, 'I am sorry, Daddy. But I want to be famous like Han Suk-Bong' " (p. 129).

There was no compulsory reading and no regular teaching schedule for reading. She read only what she wanted to. "But she read and read with enthusiasm more than one hundred simple English books. . . . These books were mostly from her kindergarten library at Francis Scott Key Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia" (p. 122). Lee notes that Yuha became an independent reader in July 1977 and that after that "she has always been and will always be" an independent reader (p. 135).

In one month, 1–31 August 1977, thanks to a special program at the Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Yuha learned to read and write Korean just before she became a first grader (pp. 138–139). Lee observes that at the end of the one-month course of instruction Yuha's "skills in the reading and writing of the Korean language were better than her corresponding English skills" (p. 139).

Her teacher describes her progress as follows:

> Yuha has a perfect command of spoken Korean. She expresses herself articulately with flawless pronunciation. She also understands spoken Korean with a high degree of precision and accuracy.
>
> She has made exceptional progress in her written Korean as well. She can quite freely transfer from letter to sound and also from sound to letter. In other words, she has begun to read and write Korean. (p. 139–140)

Yuha once commented about written Korean: "It is a lot easier to learn to read and write Korean than English," by which she meant that Korean has a regular grapheme-phoneme correspondence and English does not. She said, "I can read and write any Korean word" (p. 141). One day she said proudly to one of her father's friends at Georgetown University: "I have two speaks. Do you know the English *sun* in Korean? Do you know the English *tree* in Korean? Do you know the English *car* in Korean?" (p. 142).

Lee writes about his daughter: "She speaks and behaves like an American among Americans; she speaks and behaves like a Korean among Koreans. Early bilingual reading seems to have aided her for her bilingual and bicultural adjustment in the United States" (pp. 143–144).

Plurilingualism and Pluriliteracy

If children can learn as many languages as are present in their environment from birth, as Montessori contends, and if, as we have seen, children can learn to read two languages in early childhood, why can they not learn to read three or more languages? Logically there seems to be no reason, and yet the literature that I have surveyed records no case of early tri- or pluriliteracy.

Els Oksaar, the plurilingual Head of General Linguistics at the University of Hamburg, presented me at a recent bilingual conference with a reprint of a paper entitled "Preschool Trilingualism: A Case Study" (1978) and later sent me a copy of

her impressively comprehensive volume on *Spracherwerb im Vorschulalter: Einführung in die Pädolinguistik* (1977). These studies seemed to promise what I was looking for, especially the case study of Sven, who, already bilingual in Estonian and Swedish when the family moved from Stockholm to Hamburg, was then exposed from age 3:11 to German "through the home helper, visitors, playmates, TV, and radio" (1978: p. 129). Sven's pronunciation of Estonian and Swedish "was, from the very beginning, without interference and resembled that of a monolingual child, . . ." (p. 131) and his "German articulation of consonants and patterns of intonation were acquired without deviation from the very beginning" (p. 133). However, despite this effortless acquisition of spoken Estonian, Swedish, and German, Oksaar makes no reference to his learning to read, though one cannot help speculating that with a little encouragement Sven could have learned to read three languages as easily as he learned to speak them.

Summary

The evidence assembled in the foregoing pages clearly supports Doman's contention that tiny children *want* to learn to read—among many other forms of learning—that they *can* learn to read under favorable circumstances, that they *do* learn to read—sometimes without help, and that they *should* learn to read if we grownups believe in education at all. As Durkin points out, many parents speak of the *sheer joy* that their young children experience when they learn to read early, a joy which most parents share. The experience of the children in the three bilingual families I have cited suggests that, far from being a double burden, learning to read in two languages is a double joy, leading to a positive self-image.

The term "early" in the expressions "early reading" or "early reader" is seen to vary all the way from age six months, as with Kimio Steinberg, to nearly five years, as in the case of Yuha

Lee, suggesting that this concept is, or at least can be, quite flexible.

One notes significant uniformities among the parent-teachers involved in the cases I have cited. They exert no pressure on the child; rather they try to sense what will interest the child. The parent-teacher's task seems to consist in reading the child's wishes and in inventing games to stimulate this interest. Successful parents seem to include their young child in their conversations and activities.

Above all, early reading appears, as in the case of Yuha Lee, to be related to establishing a sense of personal and social values. Parents who read, study, and discuss interesting or important subjects in the presence of their children and who answer their children's questions create a close relationship with their children, a relationship which older children are quick to adopt with their younger siblings. The Christians, Pasts, and Lees all speak of this family closeness. In the case of the Christians and Lees, a clear distinction is made between the language of the family and the language of the world outside. In all three cases the children have learned to talk and behave like native speakers of the non-English language when they find themselves in the presence of native speakers of this language and to talk and behave like native English speakers when they are with native English speakers. In short, they have "adjusted" to the majority language and culture of the United States while continuing to cherish the home language and culture.

IV. How to Encourage Young Children To Read Two Languages

All newborn human infants are *unique*, and to help them realize as much of their unknown potential as possible is a fascinating challenge to their families. Burton White believes that most American families do reasonably well in raising their children during the first six to eight months, but he thinks "that perhaps no more than ten percent at most manage to get their children through the eight- to thirty-six-month age period as well educated and developed as they could and should be" (1975: 4). What White says about general child development probably applies equally to preparation for reading, and, if a child is lucky enough to have been born into a bilingual family, for reading in two languages. In the following pages I shall endeavor to extract from the cases examined earlier those cues which will help parents who wish to guide their children to early reading in two languages.

The Importance of an Early Start

Pregnant women report that their unborn children respond rhythmically to music, that is, that they move or kick in time with the music they hear out there. Condon and Sander have documented the rhythmical response by newborn infants to the speech of grownups, and Trevarthen has described the neonate's prespeech activities. It would therefore seem to be important for

parents and other family members to begin talking, fondling, and singing to a newborn child from birth on. Kay Past sets a good example by having read to Mariana when she was only eight months old. The favorite time of day for such reading and for playing games (e.g., with fingers and toes) seems to be at bedtime. Söderbergh reports spending from five to twenty minutes daily at bedtime with daughter Astrid. One can hardly start too early in creating a loving relationship between an infant and other members of the family and in stimulating in the young child a love of books, pictures, games, songs, and other music, in sum, all forms of cultural expression.

Choosing the Language of the Family

We have seen that the Lee family chose to make Korean the home language. Nothing could have been more natural for them. They had a grandmother living with them who spoke only Korean. Both parents were born in Korea and were dominant in Korean although they had learned English. The two girls were born in the United States. But because Korean was the family language and because they spent a year and a half of their childhood in Korea, they were dominant in Korean in their preschool years. After starting school they presumably became equilingual.

The Christian family also chose the non-English language as the normal family language. Spanish is the native language of Nancy Christian, the mother. She was born and educated in Peru, where, however, she attended an American school. Chester Christian, the father, learned Spanish as an adult, but has become fluent in it and does not feel inhibited in using it as the family language. Indeed, he thinks that Spanish serves this function better than English and has defended this view against the advice of school officials.

In addition to creating a warm, affectionate home atmosphere the exclusive use of a non-English language at home serves to maintain it against erosion by English, which would

otherwise overwhelm it. In the Southwest, for example, Spanish has already succumbed to English except where it is in immediate contact with the Spanish of Mexico. Anyone who considers Spanish, and other languages, to be valuable cultural and practical resources, as I do, must deplore the erosion and loss of our many non-English languages.

In the Past family the non-English language plays a special role, for Spanish is the native language of none of the four members of the family. To be sure, the parents, Al and Kay Past, had some contact with Spanish during their childhood in south Texas, but they acquired their present fluency through study in school and college and by seizing every opportunity to practice it with native speakers. In this way they have, like Chester Christian, acquired a love of the language to the point of wanting to hand on this love to their children. For this they deserve credit, for their use of Spanish requires a special effort and their proficiency in Spanish may never fully equal that in English. Their children's control of Spanish, on the other hand, promises to be greater than that of their parents provided that their contact with native speakers and their reading in Spanish continue uninterrupted.

A Common Misconception

One widely held misconception is that there is room in a child's head for only one language and one culture. As a result, many immigrant families, unlike the Lees, give up their home language. They talk to their children in English, often broken English, and also make no effort to teach their children to read the mother tongue. It is small wonder, then, that the children feel ashamed rather than proud of their home language, which falls into disuse. The resulting precarious hold on two languages has been called *halvspråkighet* (semilingualism) by a Swedish linguist who has observed the same phenomenon in northern Sweden on the frontier with Finland.[22]

In this as in other ways we grossly underestimate the capacities

of children. Montessori, who knew children much better than most of us, wrote, "Only the child under three can construct the mechanism of language, and he can speak any number of languages if they are in his environment at birth" (1959:40). A classic example of early plurilingualism is that cited by British psychologist J. W. Tomb:[23]

> It is common experience in the district in Bengal in which the writer resided to hear English children of three or four years old who have been born in the country conversing freely at different times with their parents in English, with their *ayahs* (nurses) in Bengali, with the garden coolies in Santali, and with the house servants in Hindustani, while their parents have learned with the aid of a *munshi* (teacher) and much laborious effort just sufficient Hindustani to comprehend what the house servants are saying (provided they do not speak too quickly) and to issue simple orders to them connected with domestic affairs. It is even not unusual to see English parents in India unable to understand what their servants are saying to them in Hindustani and being driven in consequence to bring along an English child of four or five years old, if available, to act as an interpreter. (p. 53)

The Importance of Not Underestimating a Child's Capacity

The literature on young children is studded with expressions of surprise and delight over their unsuspected capacity for learning. And yet as parents and teachers, we repeatedly make the mistake of thinking that tasks are too difficult for them. Time and again they will surprise us by uttering overheard words or thoughts of ours which we assumed were beyond their ken or reciting from memory a story which we have read to them a few times. Frequently a long, "difficult" word will appeal to them and therefore prove easier to learn and retain than simple words. *Hippopotamus* is more challenging than *cow* and may therefore be more fun to learn.

Pygmalion in the Classroom[24] is a study of the relation between teacher expectations and the intellectual development of some

first and second graders in California. When teachers were alerted to expect spurts of learning from certain tested but actually randomly selected children, their expectant attitude was rewarded by better performance on the part of the children. Though the findings have been questioned on technical grounds, it is hard to believe that such an attitude on the part of teachers could have anything but a positive effect on young learners (p. 53).

The same Pygmalion principle might well be used by parents in the home provided it does not result in pressuring children to learn what they are not interested in learning. The Pasts, Christians, and Lees have clearly not placed any limits on their expectations that their children would learn. At the same time, not knowing in advance the learning capacity of their children, they must have been agreeably surprised. The average parent, however, has a tendency to sell young children short, especially when told by school representatives that children are not ready to read before attaining a mental age of six and a half. By observing their own children closely, by responding fully to their questions, and by surrounding them with interesting materials and activities, parents can learn something of their children's potential and refrain from inhibiting their learning by limiting their expectations.

How to Balance the Two Languages

We have seen that the Pasts, Christians, and Lees all wanted their children to acquire a full literate command of both the home language and the language of the community. Since the home language is usually at a disadvantage when compared with the language of the majority, it is important to emphasize its use as much as possible. All three of the bilingual families that we have cited have done this. This was relatively easy for the Christians and Lees once they had decided to make the minority language the exclusive communicative medium of the home.

For the Pasts it has been much more difficult since the parents are dominant in the majority language; but their goal, though harder to attain, is clearly the same as that of the Christians and Lees.

Parents who wish to raise bilingual ***and biliterate*** children and transmit to them their own inherited language and culture will need to emphasize the use of the non-English language by making it not only *a* language of communication but even perhaps ***the*** language of communication in the family, depending on the community outside to teach their children English.

The Importance of Reading and Writing the Home Language

Many minority families think that speaking their language at home is enough to assure its maintenance, but the history of Spanish in the Southwest proves the fallacy of this view. The experience of whole generations of Spanish speakers, for example, on entering school has been to be taught reading and writing ***in English***. On reaching high school they are offered an opportunity to "study Spanish," that is, to learn its grammar and read and write it as though it were a foreign language. Unfortunately, the desire to learn has long since evaporated in the individual, and the opportunity for society to preserve Spanish as a valuable resource is squandered. And the same phenomenon is to be observed in dozens of other languages.

Let me cite a personal experience. My father lost his job in the depression of 1907, at which point my mother took me at age four to Sweden to live on her family's farm. In three weeks' time I became fluent in Swedish as English dropped below the surface. Returning to the United States at age six, I entered first grade and had to wait another three weeks for English to rise to the surface. Had I learned to read and write Swedish as well as to understand and speak it while I was in Sweden and had I continued to read and write it after my return to the United States, I might have acquired an educated command of it. As it was, I "studied" Swedish in college but without learning to read and

write it with ease. For me, as for millions of immigrants to this country, the critical moment was lost and my home language succumbed to English. Instead of becoming easily and proudly bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural—like Yuha Lee—I became essentially monolingual, monoliterate, and monocultural and thus less well equipped to serve my country than I might have been.

Parents as Teachers and the Home as School

Parents are in the best position to supervise and stimulate the development of children during their most favorable learning period, between birth and age five. The point is that in the child's eyes parents are—or can be—the most important, the most prestigious persons around. Everything they say or do serves as a model for a child's learning. If they include their children in their conversation and other activities, if they answer their children's questions, if they let their children see them absorbed in reading, if they sing and read to their children, the children will want to imitate them. Parents are in the best position to pick up signs of interest in and readiness for reading.

And the home is the best school, for it is the most informal. There is usually a one-to-one relationship between caretaker and child, and attention to the child has to be constant. The child's interests and efforts to understand his/her surroundings are being closely monitored and serve to guide the "teaching" by the caretaker. The basic pedagogical principle holds here as throughout education: The child learns only what he is interested in, and the successful teacher is the one who can read, and respond imaginatively to, the interests of the child. The home also provides the most flexible schedule for learning. The caretaker can arrange activities to take advantage of the child's interests, can suspend activities just before a child loses interest, and can vary the program constantly to fit both the caretaker's and the child's needs. One of the best learning times has proved to be bedtime, when mother or father can read to the child, tell

a story, sing a song, or play a game. I can remember to this day the ecstasy I experienced in Sweden when my aunt used to tell me a story at bedtime. And Söderbergh tells us that it was during this five-to-twenty-minute period that she read with her daughter and so taught her to read in the fourteen months between ages 2:4 and 3:6. Söderbergh points out, incidentally, that "literary anticipation" serves to intensify later experience. Writing of her daughter, she notes that "her first sunset, experienced in August, 1967, was a sheer delight; and the first time that she saw cows grazing she was in a rapture, stopped and shouted in a voice full of joy: 'Oh, this must be a pasture!' The sunsets and pastures of literature had finally come to life" (1977: 117).

Mobilizing Family Resources

Each person in the family represents a potential resource for the two-year-old who is straining all senses to "conquer the world." A parent who loves literature can transmit this taste for literature to an infant during bedtime reading. A young child can learn a great deal about the household arts by simply being included in the day's activities. The father and mother handling routine tasks around the home can open up whole new fields to the observant young child; they can talk about their work and show how parts of it are done. Consciously or unconsciously, older siblings can teach younger siblings, as we have seen in our three families. I have observed a family in which a boy of eleven assumed quite naturally a teaching role with younger siblings of eight, six, and three. Grandparents too can be an invaluable resource. In a family of my acquaintance a grandfather and grandmother, both monolingual in Spanish, sustain themselves spiritually by reading the Bible in Spanish. The six-year-old granddaughter and two-year-old grandson often beg to be read to. Grandparents can be wonderful storytellers too, using either happenings from their childhood or folktales that they heard from their parents or grandparents. An example of such stories

that have been published is Juan Sauvageau's *Stories That Must Not Die.*[25] Music too is a precious resource. If one or more members of the family are musical, singers or instrumentalists, so much the better, but almost any family can afford a record player or can turn on the radio to a good FM station. The same can be said about art.[26] An artistic member of the family is a great resource, but even without the stimulus of such an example young children from the age of three or four want to scribble, draw, color, and build, thus giving early expression to the artistic impulse. And very early they love to look at pictures, often reading picture books with little or no text. Families that like to play word games (e.g., Scrabble) or read, together or separately, or keep a dictionary within easy reach, find unusual joy in family activities and provide rich educational and cultural opportunities for their young children.

Methods and Materials

The Steinbergs began by taping the letters of the alphabet to the headboard and footboard of Kimio's crib when he was six months old and then progressed slowly from letters to words, to sentences, to books. Doman and Söderbergh and most of their followers have begun with words and then progressed to sentences and books. As we have read, Chester Christian observed a difference beween Raquel and Aurelio, the former showing a primary interest in letters and the latter a primary interest in words. From this we may infer that it would be unwise to prescribe exclusively either a letter approach or a word approach. Rather I suggest that parents observe their children in order to determine their primary interest. Some children may even be interested in both letters and words at the same time; they may get an equal pleasure out of playing with letter blocks, magnetic letters on the refrigerator door, word cards, signs, labels, headlines in newspapers, or words in alphabet books or readers.

In referring to letters, some authorities advocate using the

names of the letters, and others suggest using letter sounds. I belong to the letter-name school myself, but the distinction seems to me of little importance since children are going to have to learn both names and sounds eventually.

Some reading authorities stress the decoding aspect of reading, that is, matching sound and symbol; others stress reading for meaning. Personally I ally myself with the latter, but sooner or later a child will want to analyze as well as understand. Söderbergh has described in detail how this took place with her daughter Astrid. In all of this, the important point to remember is that the parent-teacher should not impose her/his preconceptions on the child but rather sense the child's interest and try to satisfy it.

There is no single method to be prescribed. Since every child is different, and so is every parent, methods too must be infinitely flexible. It is therefore more appropriate to speak not so much of methods as of principles. Right from birth, a child is in some sense an independent human being with an almost infinite potential for growth and development. The successful parent-teacher, therefore, is the one who refrains from imposing his/her will on a child but rather tries to understand the child's efforts to grow, learn, and control the environment. As Trevarthen suggests, it is the child who teaches the parent to teach. The parent who best learns this lesson is likely to be the best teacher.

The same principle should govern the selection of materials; they should, above all, be of interest to the child. Again, it is important for a parent not to decide in advance what *should* interest a child, but rather to experiment freely to discover what materials *are* of greatest interest. Many parents have discovered children's early attraction to letters, words, and books and are learning how to respond. It may sound to some as though such "teaching" is a full-time job. It *is* time-consuming, but it should not be a full-time occupation, for, not only do parents have their own lives to live, but they also must serve as worthy

models for their children. In one sense, the best teachers of reading are parents who are themselves most interested in reading.

For parents who are guiding their child toward reading and writing in two languages, it is particularly important to identify books which are both interesting and appropriate for the child's particular stage of development. Books and other materials suitable for very young children are still in short supply in this country, but it is possible to find some items in our libraries and resource centers and to import books from abroad.

Summary Guide for Bilingual Parent-Teachers

1. Observe your child closely in an effort to understand him, and from the very beginning instill in him a sense of pride in his language and cultural heritage.

2. Listen to your child carefully, praise him when he learns something (e.g., reading a sign), and answer his questions as best as you can.

3. Include your child as much as possible in your daily activities, and talk to him freely about them.

4. Try to make the non-English language the normal medium of family communication. Try to persuade your spouse to do the same. If for some reason your child understands the non-English language but does not feel like speaking it, don't press him. However, try to speak to him in the language, so that he may at least continue to understand it and be better able, when circumstances favor, to learn to speak it. Let him learn as much English as possible outside of the home.

5. Play games with your child in the non-English language, especially games involving numbers, letters, words, sentences, and books. Have fun in the non-English language.

6. Show your child that you and your spouse are interested in reading and writing, in music and art, and in as many other forms of cultural expression as possible.

7. Share with your child your fun in reading, music, art, etc.

8. Read to and with your child interesting stories, fables, poems, puzzles, conundrums, and other items in the non-English language, especially at bedtime, but be sure to stop before he loses interest.

9. Tell your child stories, sing him songs, or play word games in the non-English language, especially at bedtime, stopping before he loses interest.

10. Take your child to the public library at least once a week, get him a library card, check out some books, especially in his non-English language. Let him select his own books as much as possible.

11. Provide letter blocks, magnetic letters, pencils, crayons, paper, a chalkboard, and other materials for writing, drawing, coloring, building, etc.

12. Show your child how to use the family typewriter.

13. If you have a tape recorder, let the child record his reading, listen to it, listen to a recording of your reading (or singing), and imitate your reading (or singing). Record his reading once a month or so to show you and your child his progress.

14. Keep a notebook in which you record the words (and, later, phrases and sentences) that he learns to read, with the dates.

15. Keep your child's copying, writing, drawing, coloring in a large folder, dating each piece of work, so that you and he can follow his progress.

16. Keep a list of the books he reads, with dates, and note which ones are of special interest to him.

17. Take your child on field trips (to a library, zoo, science center, museum, concert, play, etc.).

18. Keep a diary in which you record your observations, your child's activities, happenings of particular interest or significance, and ideas for the future.

19. Take an interest in your schools, especially in bilingual education in your community. Attend your school board meetings.

20. As your child approaches kindergarten age, become acquainted with the principal of your neighborhood school or the nearest (or best) bilingual school and with other key educators in your community (e.g., the director of elementary education, the director of bilingual education).

21. Explain that your child is fully bilingual and that he can read two languages with pleasure and pride at his maturity level; find out what the possibilities are of his finding the appropriate level in school, i.e., continuing to learn from his level of achievement without boring repetition of what he already knows.

V. Conclusion

Up to the present, our schools, even when they have tried, more often than not have been remarkably unsuccessful in teaching foreign languages and in cultivating cross-cultural understanding. Even the incentive of a Bilingual Education Act with its millions of dollars in federal aid has not greatly altered the picture. Families cannot rely on the schools to support efforts toward bilingualism/biliteracy. For some time to come, parents are well advised to do as the Christians, Pasts, and Lees have done, namely, to devise their own home biliteracy programs.

This being so, they would do well to start early, taking advantage of what Benjamin Bloom and others have shown us about the importance of the earliest years for learning. Condon and Sander and Trevarthen have ascertained that almost from birth infants are sensitive to language and make efforts to communicate. The Steinbergs have demonstrated that infants, even from the age of six months, can take the first steps toward reading. Jane Torrey has documented one of what must be many cases of young children learning to read by themselves. Dolores Durkin's research, and that of Harris, Morrison, Serwer, and Gold, suggest that a percentage of school beginners, varying from one to four, are already readers. Montessori has declared that children can learn as many languages as are spoken natively

in their environment, and Tomb has given us an example of this ability. Astrid Söderbergh is two years ahead of her contemporaries. The Christian and Past children are at least two years ahead of their age group in reading.

As Buckminster Fuller observes,[27] "Every well-born child is originally geniused, but is swiftly degeniused by unwitting humans and/or physically unfavorable environmental factors."

Norman O. Brown (1966: 142), quoting Freud and Wordsworth, writes: "The ego-feeling we are aware of now is thus only a shrunken vestige of a far more extensive feeling—a feeling which embraced the universe and expressed an inseparable connection of the ego with the external world.[28] The possibilities adumbrated in infancy are to be taken as normative: as in Wordsworth's 'Ode' ['on Intimations of Immortality']: before shades of the prison-house close in; before we shrink up into the fallen condition which is normal adulthood."

And here is a translated quotation attributed to Marcel Proust which captures the spirit of my message: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

In a lighter vein, let me conclude with the monologue of an early reader as rendered by Batiuk in the comic strip, "Funky Winkerbean":

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5. Since most of the papers dealt with some aspect of bilingualism, Doman's paper was not included in the conference proceedings. It has, however, been published as Appendix B, pp. 209–222, of *Bilingual Schooling in the United States,* by Theodore Andersson and Mildred Boyer, second edition, Austin, Texas: National Educational Laboratory Publishers, Inc., 1978.

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14. For example, he refers to Lewis M. Terman's *Genetic Studies of Genius*, Vol. 1, *Mental and Physical Traits of a Thousand Gifted Children*, and especially Catherine M. Cox's *Genetic Studies of Genius*, Vol. 2, *The Early Mental Traits of Three Hundred Geniuses*, citing such early readers as Jeremy Bentham, Thomas Macaulay, Blaise Pascal, Sir Francis Galton, and John Stuart Mill.

15. Three more useful manuals are Nancy Larrick's *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*, fourth edition, New York: Bantam Books, 1975; Toni S. Gould's *Home Guide to Early Reading*, New York: Penguin Books, 1978; and Jane Ervin's *Your Child* Can *Read and* You *Can Help: A Book for Parents*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1979.

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19. Joan Beck is also the author of a popular and intelligent manual titled *How to Raise a Brighter Child: The Case for Early*

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26. One of the activities used by Glenn Doman in his Better Baby Institute programs is showing young children reproduc-

tions of well-known paintings. After only a few viewings they usually are able not only to identify them but also to recognize a characteristic style in other works by the same artist.

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